

to do with the  
he "couldn't tell  
neant yes or no."  
a squarely on top  
ouldn't account for  
changed her mind  
y all wanted to  
ballots. This was  
unofficial. After  
spoiled or double-  
thrown out.  
al official report  
e for the holiday.  
reported, twenty-  
thrown out. Mrs.  
straight for the  
ive were victims  
ealing and insin-  
not know it—not  
y were in for it.  
bands say?"

d!!!!!!"  
w the bridge to

ve to go—and  
g do we have to  
ill it cost—and  
le we're away—

frs. Mills, grasp-  
hands. "My  
mmed up with  
a minute. Now  
I've thought of  
u five days to  
your husbands  
to go. I know  
the shooting-box  
water's edge,  
mine—he has a  
all ours for the  
r own bedding,  
k or so, and the  
I'll contribute a  
of coffee, an-  
on. Each can  
ler of canned  
of jelly, we'll  
up half a dozen  
wanted, a bag  
measure. AND  
THERE YOU  
can mortal

s the point,

? You must  
hat. I know  
ole it may be  
et at present,  
to start, and  
men friends—  
Norah here,  
em Norah is,  
the rounds of  
ener if neces-  
ren are doing  
g properly—  
so away with  
s, there's not  
reshing is at  
back for that.  
ave—good-bye.  
m. I'll come  
ear—good-bye,

know about  
ills' adherents  
ck or buggy  
intent upon  
ands round,"  
though un-  
he undertak-  
thing in that  
o joke about,  
runs through  
Jane always  
n't hurt if I  
ake with rich  
thing better,  
with flake  
I'll pave the

had gorged  
meal, upon  
dainties and

rink—Drugs—  
y the Keeley  
ven only by  
atient's home.  
nipeg.

VER ACTION  
elling 20 Art and  
Post Cards at 10c.  
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were at rest and peace with the uni-  
verse, was the impressionable epoch in  
which to make the delicate appeal.

"Jack."  
"Hello! wha'd-yuh-wa-ant?"  
"Jack," repeated a small voice, "I've  
been noticing a little lately that you  
seem to be getting chronically cross—  
and I—don't believe the other women's  
husbands are cross to them, and they're  
all going I think."

"Going, going WHERE—who—women,  
—what do yuh mean, Sue?"

"You knew we were all out to Mrs.  
Mills this afternoon, and—"

"I knew YOU were, but not the rest."

"Well, we were—six of us in all and  
Mrs. Mills planned a holiday—camping  
for us six—and all the others are go-  
ing—and we voted on it and there was  
a majority of five in favor, so all the  
others must have voted for it because  
—I—a—couldn't be sure you'd be will-  
ing for me to go and so I—I—, first I  
thought you'd let me go and wrote  
down yes, and then I thought you  
wouldn't and put down no,—and they  
threw out my ballot, because it was  
spoiled they said, and the others must  
have been sure of their husbands be-  
cause you see they all voted yes."

Jack was erect in his chair by now.  
"Do the others know whose ballot was  
spoiled?"

"Oh no. Norah wouldn't let us look.  
She said it wasn't official to look."

"And my little girl was the only one  
who couldn't trust her husband to see  
her through?" observed Jack in a con-  
trolled tone.

"I couldn't be positive how you'd  
take it," hesitated Mrs. Jack, in a sad  
little voice, "and it would be so horrid  
to promise and then have to back out  
and everybody'd know why—and then  
there's all the work, and the children  
and—"

"Hang the work," exploded Jack.  
You're not going to stay for any work,  
and I'll take care of the children. You  
bet, you're going. You'll be the first  
one on the job. Next Wednesday, did  
you say, at ten a.m.? I'll take you  
over myself. The neighbors won't get  
anything on my little girl," fiercely  
apostrophized Jack; while Mrs. Jack  
swallowed two frogs and a whole ripple  
of gurgles on Mr. Jack's shoulder; nor  
does she know to this day what effect  
if any, either the Johnnycake or the  
cinnamon pie had upon Jack's heart,  
stomach or gizzard, nor does she know  
whether his generosity was inspired by  
natural perversity, or everyday manly  
pomposity.

On the morning of Wednesday, there  
was unusual stir about the home of  
Mrs. Jack. The children were admon-  
ished and kissed and cuddled unduly  
and an air of subdued excitement per-  
vaded the household. At 9.45 bundles  
and wraps and supplies were being hur-  
ried into a rig; at 9.45 Mr. Jack ac-  
companied by a radiant Mrs. Jack,  
drove triumphantly into the well-or-  
dered yard of Mrs. Mills. He "thought  
he'd just save Mrs. Mills the trouble  
of sending over for Sue and her things."  
Mrs. Mills was delighted. She swept a  
comprehensive glance over the various  
roads and counted four rigs, rapidly  
approaching her premises. Mr. Jack  
noted the spark that flashed her eyes  
at the rally. He stood up to investi-  
gate. There were the other four bring-  
ing in their wives and baggage. What,  
and how much did Mrs. Mills know or  
suspect? Mr. Jack's countenance fell  
forty points. From being the sole hero  
on the stage, he had to divide honors  
with other four, all heroes. Mrs. Mills  
ran inside "to see that everything was  
ready," which afforded a much-needed  
opportunity to release a smothered  
laugh. Her heaven was working al-  
ready, albeit in the dark. Mrs. Jack  
reflected Mr. Jack's reserve. The men  
regarded each other as to say "And  
pray what brought YOU here," though  
the cause was plainly patent. All the  
men repudiated tea at ten a.m. The  
women stepped to the verandah to  
partake of a "stirrup-cup." Mrs. Mills  
as per promise imparted the location of  
the camp, which was to be kept a dead  
secret from the men. "Women could  
go camping, sure they could without  
advice and supervision of any man."  
And they did. However under cover of

kissing him good-bye, Mrs. Jack in-  
formed Mr. Jack where the camp was.  
"Don't breathe it or they'll NEVER  
forgive me," she warned.

"Trust ME," reassured Mr. Jack.

The men returned to their desolate  
farms, and the women to their reluc-  
tant camping. After the usual semi-  
comic, vexatious, futile efforts to settle  
in camp and enjoy the simple life out  
of doors, with ants in the liquid butter  
that someone forgot to put in the  
cave dug with quite inadequate mus-  
cles from the shaley side of a knoll, a  
meal of fish ninety-six per cent bones  
and fins, potatoes baked in the ashes,  
burnt to a crisp on one side and very  
raw on the other, and tea that tasted  
of coffee, and coffee that tasted of tea  
as how could they help it being cooked  
in the selfsame dish; where inquisi-  
tive gnats and mosquitos and spiders  
and bugs explored and sampled and  
"saw that it was good." Every throbb-  
ing inch of anatomy, especially those  
portions that the sun had already blis-  
tered, when the aged stock of jest and  
anecdote had filtered into the remote  
past, when at that childless "children's  
hour" all of the doughty campers, bar-  
ring Mrs. Mills, were sitting dismally  
about a smoky fire at the camp's  
doorway, mutely visualizing the jolly  
bedtime scampers of their little broods  
at home, anathematizing the temporary  
lunacy that lured them from sane home  
comforts, the regular orthodox camping  
programme in its initial stages—camp-  
ing has its own peculiar well-ordered  
graduating grade of apprenticeship, ad-  
mitting no exceptions—misery, suffering  
rebellion, want, woe, discomfort, regret,  
toleration, ease, pleasure, gladness, great  
joy rejuvenated glee and loyalty to  
camp life.

At the close of the third day then  
when Misery and Rebellion, combined  
in equal parts, gazed drearily into the  
smoky blaze, vainly seeking a plausi-  
ble pretext upon which to break jail,  
escape home and elude the balance of  
the sentence; just at that precise mo-  
ment when courage was at its forlorn-  
est ebb, and Mrs. Mills was cudgelling  
her fertile brain to quell the incipient  
mutiny, a fearful noise of floundering,  
and thrashing among the trees, as  
though some giant mastodon, enraged  
at being caged so long, had broken  
loose from the Glacial Period, making  
the most of his freedom—was smashing  
through the forest, levelling everything  
before him.

The awe-struck campers clung to  
each other in sudden panic. "It's an  
ill wind blows now," and this horror,  
if they survived it, which was unlikely,  
at least would furnish a real reason for  
deserting camp and going home in  
stately justification. Even in their di-  
rect terror (so fleet is a glance of the  
mind), they hoped the approaching hor-  
ror would smash the hateful camp to  
atoms, sparing them of course, thereby  
compelling them to go home.

As the smashing and crashing grew in  
volume, and total annihilation im-  
minent, every breath was held, and every  
eye glued to the point of anticipated  
attack, the figure of a much dishevelled  
man burst through the scrubby gloom  
into the small dim camp clearing. "I  
—I—I beg pardon—I—thought it was  
farther on—I—was running," depre-  
cated he.

One coatpocket dangled from its base  
exuding a rosy, bulby stream of yel-  
lowish fluid, the shattered remains of  
a half dozen fresh eggs, forgotten in  
the forest sprinting. Mrs. Jack's hands  
flew to her guilty face. It was Mr.  
Jack—solid proof that she had betrayed  
her hiding place. His reception regis-  
tered two degrees below freezing. Nat-  
urally nobody wants to be caught in  
an absurd panic. By dint of abject  
apologies and direct vows, "That wild  
horses couldn't drag from him to any  
soul living or dead, the—er—state of  
—of mild surprise in which he—  
found them," Mr. Jack mounted speed-  
ily in the good graces of the mollified  
campers. After all it was good to be  
alive even in a camp. He was beset by  
the liveliest sallies, and most solicitous  
inquiries as to his welfare, several of-  
fers of assistance in repairing his in-  
jured attire. Mrs. Jack began to cher-  
ish hopes of forgiveness, not to say

gratitude for her betrayal, even to bask  
in a few minor rays of her consort's  
effulgence. The reaction from deepest  
gloom and abject terror to even tem-  
porary gaiety and security, was surging  
Mr. Jack higher and higher toward  
the topmost wave of fraternal popu-  
larity, even heroism. Here was he, the  
sole male, sharing a delightful inviol-  
able confidence, their confidence, with  
six friendly ladies—all fair, his exult-  
ant bliss, spurred by a reasonable hope  
that the other four, either missed their  
way or, better still, were silent hidden  
watchers of his triumph.

When they could stand it no longer  
the other four Jacks, so far discreetly  
concealed behind contiguous tree-trunks,  
wringing their wits in a spasm of  
choosing between slinking off home  
undiscovered, thus minimizing that  
wretch's success, or play second fiddle  
and struggle into camp without a single  
beat of drum; at this exasperating  
point of indecision, Mr. Jack's cheery  
challenge waked the echoes: "Hello—  
hello there boys—come on in! here's  
the camp!" The game was up, and  
there they were trapped like sheep  
meekly into a corral.

They hid their chagrin in an im-  
promptu race into camp each vocifer-  
ously jollying the other's explanation  
of his accidental appearance,—all the  
wives radiating jubilation at the unex-  
pected visit, plying their liege lords  
with intimate domestic inquiries. The  
original Jack was already a forgotten  
back number, reduced to the solace of  
his spouse's adulating murmurs, supple-  
mented by a careful one-fifth section of  
Mrs. Mills impersonal attentions.

After an ambrosial feast of tea made  
in the coffee pot, whitened with canned  
cream and bread toasted or smoked  
black upon long forked sticks, the far-  
mer gallants retired en bloc to their  
pastoral homes and the despondent  
campers became inexplicably reconciled  
to serve the balance of their sentence  
in cheerful patience. Camping had pos-  
sibilities after all. To the end that  
the listener may have a fuller compre-  
hension of the incident, the chronicler  
might state that the spectacular and  
simultaneous delivery of the wives over  
to Mrs. Mills instead of waiting to be  
called for, roused the mistrust of every  
man and put him on his mettle. When  
Mr. Jack casually remarked, too casu-  
ally indeed, at the postoffice, that he'd  
"have to run up to the Elbow to look  
over the horse he was buying for the  
fall plowing," all four men casually  
"wished him luck with the horse" and  
silently opined that Jack would stand  
watching, and so would the woman's  
camp.

The next day and succeeding days,  
the rigors of camp life began to per-  
ceptibly subside and merge into com-  
fort interest and pleasure. Boating and  
bathing and forest tramping and abor-  
iginal cookery lost their asperities and  
every evening now held out its own  
promise; but the men did not return.  
The sabbath was a day of extreme an-  
ticipation. Mrs. Mills had made ar-  
rangements for a noonday luncheon at  
a point some miles across the lake. An  
early start was made by boat. As the  
party boarded the boat Mrs. Mills, the  
last to leave camp, pinned up in a con-  
spicuous place a sheet of white paper  
bearing this legend:

To Whom It May Concern.

Sunday, 9 a.m.

WILL BE BACK TO-MORROW.

Luncheon concluded Mrs. Mills con-  
voked the party to a neighboring farm  
house where evening dinner was a lur-  
ing feature of the entertainment. It  
was dark when they returned to camp.  
Mrs. Mills cautiously lit the evening  
fire with the incriminating proclama-  
tion. Involuntarily their expectant  
faces fell, when a hasty glance revealed  
the tenantless camp. But what was  
that? In one swoop every head bent  
above a bench set by some strange  
hand in the centre of the camp, and  
upon it reposed in a tempting array,  
one large bottle of mixed pickles, one  
box of chocolates, one baked chicken,  
one large fruit cake, and one huge wa-  
termelon. Attached to each gift rudely  
but legibly inscribed by means of a

charred stick upon greasy brown wrap-  
ping paper, was the name of the donor,  
mute but moving testimony to a dis-  
appointed husband's devotion. With  
what stoic resignation had he relin-  
quished hope in a share of the feast;  
and what "an hunger" he cherished on  
his lonely homeward way as the even-  
ing shadows fell!

"We never miss the water till the  
well runs dry," lilted Mrs. Mills, while  
each consort with shining eyes, hugged  
her liege-lord's gift, none the less  
ecstatically that the last man in had  
taken his pick of the prior gifts, at-  
tached his own name thereto, and re-  
arranged the others to suit his vag-  
rant fancy.

The second day later Mrs. Mills  
with the art of a Samivel Veller, the  
advocate of "stopping before you get  
enough of anything which is sure to  
make you want more of it" when an-  
ticipation and preparation of a specially  
good day were at their height, sud-  
denly summoned the campers before  
her and imperatively declared an im-  
mediate breaking-up of camp, leaving  
the day's plans unfulfilled.

"No. Not a last fish, or row, or dip,  
or tramp. In thirty minutes the car  
leaves," declaimed Mrs. Mills in mock  
magisterial austerity.

"But we insist upon just one more  
day."

"The order stands—we can all re-  
turn next year—that's the best I can  
do for you this time," and the move  
was promptly effected.

In thirty minutes the loaded car was  
purring down the wooded trail leading  
to the main road upon which an hour  
later the valiant tourists recklessly  
swung into their homes and dropped  
unhindered into the joyous bosom of  
their families, one full day before they  
were expected, forestalling the hus-  
bands' intent to formally escort them  
back.

At the first skirl of the motor horn,  
the children flew from all quarters to  
welcome the long lost mama. The cats  
purred and the dogs barked and leaped  
and licked indiscriminately in parox-  
ysms of joy; the chickens stalked and  
cackled cautiously inquiring of each  
other if it was another thanksgiving  
day. Six women out of one district  
certainly left a vacuum. Their return  
was more extraordinary than their ex-  
odus. But there they were safe and  
nearly sound, and the children obvi-  
ously hale and hearty, and Norah jus-  
tified their confidence and proved a  
most impartial and efficient superin-  
tendent, and Mr. Jack unhitched a full  
hour before the noon recess in honor  
of the great occasion, and waked the  
stable echoes after dinner, blithely car-  
rolling, "For to me you're as fair as  
you were Maggie, when you and I were  
young." But when Mr. Jack had turned  
the grain into the nickering horses'  
cribs, and stood leaning, propped by a  
sturdy arm against the doorway, gaz-  
ing introspectively across the bleaching  
fields the vaunting note fell to a minor  
key, and the old song soon slipped into  
silence.

"And I always thought Mrs. Mills  
was just one v-e-r-y ordinary mortal  
with no suspicion of wings, and lo!  
with a magic touch, inspired by heaven  
only knows what secret impulse or dei-  
fied intuition she has transformed the  
drudgery of daily sordid toil into a  
labor of love—unveiled a fresh vision  
of the worth-while things, and flashed  
a new zest into daily domestic com-  
munion. We were adrift upon a drab  
sea of fatal monotony—men are only  
boys grown big—as needful of recrea-  
tion as—as—and just so we used to  
thwart and cheat each other at the old  
Ag. college a dozen years ago—"

And Mrs. Jack? A vague brooding  
shadow dissolved before the sunshine  
of a serene and kinder day.

When the last camper was restored  
to her own hearthstone and the car  
shunted to its accustomed shelter, Mrs.  
Mills reluctantly entered her own si-  
lent abode. No radiant husband was  
there to welcome her. "Would he ever  
return? Had they irretrievably missed  
the fingerposts to peace and happiness?  
If she could, how gladly would she  
blaze a trail for other strays—"